

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
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P R 270815Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2824
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION UN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 5581

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, IS, US
SUBJECT: U.S. SECURITY GUARANTEE FOR ISRAEL

REF: TEL AVIV 5007

1. PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A U.S.
SECURITY GUARANTEE FOR ISRAEL, REPORTED IN REFTTEL,
HAS CONTINUED TO TAKE PLACE IN VARIOUS INTERVIEWS
AND COMMENTS. ONE OF THE MORE PROMINENT ISRAELI PERSONALITIES
TO ADDRESS HIMSELF TO THIS SUBJECT RECENTLY WAS FORMER FOREIGN
MINISTER ABBA EBAN. IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN YEDIOT
AHARONOT APRIL 6, EBAN TOUCHED ON A NUMBER OF POINTS; THE PORTION
OF THE INTERVIEW DEALING WITH U.S./ISRAELI SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS
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FOLLOWS:

2. BEGIN TEXT:

Q. THESE DAYS THE WELL-KNOWN JOURNALIST JAMES RESTON HAS PUT
FORWARD THE IDEA THAT THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO SET UP TWO MILITARY
BASES IN ISRAEL WITH THE OBJECT THAT THEY WOULD BE A GUARANTEE FOR

OUR SECURITY. WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

A. FOR THE TIME BEING THE AMERICANS ARE RATHER CAUTIOUS ABOUT THIS SUBJECT, ALTHOUGH MR. VANCE HAS SAID THAT, IF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF U.S. BASES WOULD BRING ABOUT THE SIGNING OF A PEACE TREATY BETWEEN US AND THE ARABS AND WOULD GIVE ISRAEL ADDED SECURITY, - HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER IT. I THINK THAT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS A DEFENSE PACT WITH THE U.S. OUGHT TO BE SERIOUS AND POSITIVE; BACK IN 1955 SECRETARY OF STATE FOSTER DULLES SPOKE WITH ME ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A DEFENSE PACT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL, BUT SINCE HE MADE THIS DEPENDENT ON FAR-REACHING TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS IN THE NEGEV ON OUR PART, WE REJECTED THE IDEA. HOWEVER, THE LATE BEN GURION SAID IN A CABINET SESSION AT THE TIME: "WE CANNOT ACCEPT DULLES' PROPOSAL BECAUSE OF THE STRINGS ATTACHED TO IT, BUT IT IS A GREAT DAY WHEN THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE SPEAKS ABOUT THE VERY POSSIBILITY OF IT." THE PROBLEM WHICH YOU HAVE MENTIONED HAS NOW CORPPED UP WITH GREATER URGENCY; THE QUESTION IS WHETHER, AND FOR HOW LONG, ISRAEL WILL BE ABLE TO BASE HER SECURITY ON HER POWER OF SELF-DEFENSE, WHEN WE ARE SURROUNDED BY 100 MILLION ARABS WHO ARE PROGRESSING IN THE TECHNIQUE OF WAR, WHEN THE ARSENALS OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS ARE OPEN TO THEIR PETRO-DOLLARS. I BELIEVE THAT, IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN OUR SECURITY WITH OUR OWN STRENGTH, PROVIDED WE WILL PRESERVE REASONABLE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHY SHOULDN'T WE SIGN AN ALLIANCE WITH THE U.S.? EVEN FRANCE OF DEGAULLE, WITH ALL HIS DOCTRINE OF UNCLASSIFIED

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UPRIGHTEOUSNESS, HAS NEVER TREATED WITH CONTEMPT, TO THIS DAY, THE STATUS OF BEING A CONTRACTUAL ALLY OF THE U.S.

Q. WE HAVE ALWAYS DECLARED THAT WE DO NOT WANT THE LIFE OF ONE SINGLE U.S. SOLDIER TO BE ENDANGERED BECAUSE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL. ISN'T THAT CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU HAVE JUST SAID?

A. IF IT IS NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE U.S., THEY WILL NOT ENDANGER THEIR LIVES FOR OUR SAKE. FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE LIVES OF U.S. SOLDIERS, THE PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. IS RESPONSIBLE AND NOT ISRAELI PRIME MINISTERS. AND THE PRESIDENT DETERMINES WHAT IS IN THE ESSENTIAL INTEREST OF THE U.S. IT IS HIGH TIME WE WERE LESS SENSITIVE ON THAT SUBJECT: BRITAIN, GERMANY, JAPAN, TURKEY AND CANADA ARE NOT ASHAMED OF BEING CONTRACTUAL ALLIES OF THE U.S. I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT OUR POLITICIANS EXAMINE THE SUBJECT THOROUGHLY AND NOT REJECT IT OUT OF HAND. END TEXT. VIETS

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